



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

New Library of Virginia Traveling Exhibition Explores the History of a Shared Signing Community

The Lantz Mills Deaf Village exhibition opens at Shenandoah County Public Library on Sept. 8

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 22, 2022

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RICHMOND, VIRGINIA – The latest traveling exhibition from the Library of Virginia explores the history of the Lantz Mills Deaf Village in Shenandoah County, Virginia. Visit the exhibition's opening venue, **Shenandoah County Public Library in Edinburg, Virginia, between Sept. 8 and Nov. 1, 2022**, to learn more about this fascinating community.

Between 1740 and 1970, Lantz Mills, Virginia, was home to many families with a mix of hearing and deaf parents and at least one or more deaf siblings. When both the hearing and deaf members of a locality use a shared visual language to communicate, that is known as a shared signing community. Those familiar with deaf culture may know that Martha's Vineyard, the island off Massachusetts, was home to a shared signing community where 25% of the population was deaf. But few know that Virginia had a deaf village and shared signing community in Shenandoah County.

This six-panel traveling exhibition features the history of prominent deaf villagers such as the Hollar and Christian families, deaf members' involvement in local businesses, and even a budding romance within the community. Each panel includes a QR code that links to ASL interpretation of the text featured.

The exhibition is based on a booklet about the topic written by deaf historian and Lantz Mills Deaf Village descendant Kathleen Brockway. The booklet was commissioned as part of Shenandoah County's 250th anniversary celebration this year.

The exhibition runs **Sept. 8 to Nov. 1, 2022, at Shenandoah County Public Library, 514 Stoney Creek Blvd, Edinburg, Virginia**. Visit the library's website at <https://countylib.org/hours-locations.html> for open hours and other information.

Join deaf historian Kathleen Brockway on Sept. 8 at 4 p.m. at Shenandoah County Public Library for a free exhibition-opening program with an ASL interpreter. Brockway's booklet on the Lantz Mills Deaf Village will be available for free to the first 200 visitors. For more information about the exhibition or the opening program, please contact Nan Carmack at nan.carmack@lva.virginia.gov or 804.692.3792.

After Nov. 1, the exhibition will be available for loan to other organizations. To borrow the Lantz Mills Deaf Village Traveling Exhibition, please contact Barbara Batson at barbara.batson@lva.virginia.gov or 804.692.3721.

For more information about the commonwealth's deaf culture, visit the **Virginia Deaf Culture Digital Library** at www.deaflibva.org.

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About the Library of Virginia

The Library of Virginia is one of the oldest agencies of Virginia government, founded in 1823 to preserve and provide access to the state's incomparable printed and manuscript holdings. Its collection, which has grown steadily through the years, is the most comprehensive resource in the world for the study of Virginia history, culture, and government with over 130 million items in the collections. The Library also engages the public through in-person and virtual events, education programs, and online resources that reach nearly 4 million individuals each year throughout the commonwealth and beyond. The Library of Virginia is located near Capitol Square in downtown Richmond at 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219. Visit **www.lva.virginia.gov**.